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ABSTRACT

The controversy over the question of foreign language requirements in colleges and universities is aired in 43 letters by German department chairmen in selected, leading institutions. The letters, solicited in March 1969, provide random reactions and are mainly written in defense of the maintenance of the requirement. (RL)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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the Foreign Language Requirements

a collection of comments

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF GERMAN

Flood 135

INTRODUCTION

In view of the ever growing attack on the FL requirements, the Executive Secretary of the American Association of Teachers of German sought to obtain a sampling of reactions to this trend. To achieve this, the AATG National Office made a random selection, during March 1969, of 43 leading German Departments at colleges and universities. A letter was sent to the Head of each department requesting that he give his opinion. That letter may be found immediately following this introduction. It was felt that the replies contained such a candid cross section of feeling, that the reaction of the profession could best be presented by reproducing the letters exactly as they were received at the AATG National Office. All the letters of those who elected to reply are hereby presented.

American Association of Teachers of German

HANS W. DEEKEN
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

NATIONAL OFFICE
339 WALNUT STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19106
(215) WA 5-8510

March 21, 1969

Dear Professor:

On a recent visit to several AATG Chapters, I was confronted with questions concerning arguments for retention of the College and University language requirements. I am turning to you as a person who must have given this matter considerable thought with the following request:

Could you, in a one or two page letter, using the official stationery of your department, outline your arguments and thoughts regarding this question. I am, at the same time, writing an identical letter to a number of your colleagues in other leading universities in the hope that we will receive statements which we can xerox and bind in folders to be made available to colleagues who are confronted with this particular battle.

You are obviously better qualified than I to think of all the counter arguments which a Faculty Committee or College Administration may have in mind. I, therefore, cannot suggest to you which form your statement should take except that it be as precise as possible and that it take into serious account the fact that, in many cases, academic reasoning and scholarly standards are being overshadowed by emotionalism and superficial pragmatism.

Thanking you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

H. W. Deeken

H. W. Deeken
Executive Secretary

HWD:mk

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE
BRYN MAWR, PENNSYLVANIA 19010

MAR 2 6 1969

DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN

March 25, 1969

Mr. Hans W. Deeken
Executive Secretary, AATG
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Dear Mr. Deeken:

In response to your letter of March 21 I want to tell you that I have been concerned about the status of foreign languages in the curriculum for some time now. The situation is equally serious on the high school, the undergraduate, and the graduate level. Your idea of assembling a folder with material on the language situation is an excellent one. I am sure many of us will want to turn to you for a copy of the material once it is ready.

My main argument in support of a foreign language requirement is the fact that through a foreign language one is introduced to a new world. Thus the language requirement is parallel in its effects to a science requirement. Not to be exposed to a foreign language -- to the culture of the people who speak the foreign language -- threatens to foster provincialism in a nation. We would no longer realize that there are other ways from our own of looking at things. There is no better method of finding out about these other ways than to study the language of the people one wants to understand.

Other persons will write to you of how foreign languages form necessary tools for professional competence. I want to turn to one other aspect of the issue that might not generally be mentioned. Unquestionably, one goal of education is the search for answers that come as close to the truth as is humanly possible. In such a search teacher and students participate. If we study a nation whose language is not English and if the student does not know this language, he has to rely on second-hand information provided by translations and interpreters. The fact that the instructor of the course might know the foreign language involved does not put the student in a better position since he still will have to rely on an interpreter. The very nature of such courses does not permit the student to come to final and legitimate conclusions about the material he is studying. The same is true in the case of courses that take up literature in translation in which one is looking at texts that are but blurred and often distorted copies of the original. Such compromises might do for certain special situations but should not be publicized as ideal solutions since through them students cannot gain lasting, authentic knowledge. And is this not the goal of education?

Sincerely yours,

Christoph E. Schweitzer
Chairman

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
AT
CHAPEL HILL

DEPARTMENT OF
GERMANIC LANGUAGES

414-418 DEY HALL

APR 1 1969

March 27, 1969

Mr. H. W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
A.A.T.G.
330 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Dear Mr. Deeken:

I am happy to comply with your request to express my views with regard to college and university language requirements. Controversy rages on virtually every major campus in the nation as to whether these requirements should be abolished and we have all given the matter serious thought.

To begin with, I think it is helpful to inquire why it is that the language requirements are under such heavy fire at this time. The answers usually given are that students today seek greater freedom in the choice of their studies and that specialization no longer permits such luxuries as learning a foreign language. My own feeling is that another reason is far more basic. I believe the hostility of the educators now warring against the language requirement stems from their own language learning experience ten, twenty, or thirty years ago and who are convinced that this language learning experience was a waste of time.

There is no question that language instruction in this country prior to the Second World War was often mediocre. The focus was poor--emphasis on grammar rules and translation--and the teachers were inadequate--many of them were unable to speak with any fluency the language they were instructing. The frustration and disgust felt by members of my generation have been made known to me on countless occasions.

What many of these people clearly do not know is the marked improvement in language instruction in the past two decades. I am no dreamy-eyed romantic and I am quite familiar with some of the more spectacular fiascos in the

field of direct method teaching, particularly in the high schools, in recent years. But it is quite evident in the language program here at the University of North Carolina and in that of other schools and universities with which I am familiar, that we now have better teachers, better methods, better textbooks and better motivation. Language instruction in four semesters does achieve real result. Students can read a work in a foreign tongue with a modicum of dictionary use and derive both information and aesthetic enjoyment. They can go to the foreign land and express themselves reasonably well. In a word, language instruction today achieves it stated goal and needs no apologists.

To turn, then, to the matter of the foreign language requirement, I believe that it should be retained for three basic reasons.

1. Reasonable familiarity with at least one major foreign language is essential to any good liberal arts program. The pertinent arguments have been stated many times, but let me say once again: words can be translated and ideas conveyed, but translations do not permit real access to the mentality and culture of a foreign people. The culture of a country is carried to a large extent in the associative force of words and these defy translation. In this connection, I always think back to a meeting of American Exchange Students and a number of German students in the ominous summer of 1939. The Americans spoke a little German but without a true feeling for the words they were using. It was both amusing and heartbreaking to see how the two groups spoke "past" one another. They agreed as to the denotative meaning of the words. As for the connotative import, the two groups of students were miles apart.

2. It is important in a time of vitally significant competition among countries that we preserve our image as a cultured nation. Unfortunately, the image of the uncultured "Ugly American" persists. We spend many billions of dollars to accelerate the conquest of the moon lately to maintain our international prestige. How wisely are these billions spent if the nations of the world still look at us as boors unable and unwilling to break the language barrier and penetrate into their cultural world? A colleague told me recently that at the Olympic Games in Mexico, only the Americans were poor

linguists and despite their physical prowess were looked down upon for this reason. And I could cite many experiences of my own. For example, in 1952 when Vienna was occupied by the four Allied Powers, only the United States paid the costs of maintaining their troops in the city. Despite this generosity, however, the Austrians respected and admired the other soldiers more, French, British, and even Russian, because they had some knowledge of German and some appreciation of Austrian culture.

3. Undergraduate students may have the best of intentions but they do not have the experience necessary to decide for themselves what to study in their first years of college. Often students switch in later semesters to a science and find their way barred because they are deficient in language. Guidance is a necessary principle, and a language requirement is an essential part of guiding students to one of the fundamental experiences of a liberal arts education.

One might continue with numerous minor arguments, but these must suffice. I really think, though, that at the present time the important thing for language educators is not only to eludicate the value of the foreign language requirements, but also to make abundantly clear that present-day language instruction is achieving its goal far better than ever before.

Sincerely yours,

Herbert W. Reichert

Herbert W. Reichert
Chairman

HWR:clk

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801

APR 1 1969

27 March 1969

Mr. Hans Werner Deeken
National Carl Schurz Assn.
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Dear Hans Werner,

I am happy to answer your letter of 21 March as best I can, but I have an idea that what I have to say might not at first strike you as useful. The most effective "argument" which I could offer to "colleagues who are confronted with this particular battle" is the simple statement: we here at Illinois just underwent the treatment, and after countless hours of committee meetings plus twelve to fifteen College meetings we ended up with a set of language requirements which is probably a little stronger than before--increase by one year (from two to three) for the entrance requirement, no change in the level of the college degree requirement, although a greater variety of instruction will, no doubt, result. It has been my experience that citation of authority, i.e., "Northwestern kept its requirement," "Texas increased its requirement," etc. is still the most telling argument in academic discussion.

Personally, I have found it unwise for us in language teaching to become directly involved in campus discussions about required language study, especially if we advocate a language requirement. I do not mean this as a comment on what is academically or morally proper behavior for us, but only on the effectiveness of our taking a stand.

By and large, I have discovered no effective way outside the classroom for convincing our students and colleagues of the value of language study. I take it for granted that good teaching involves, first of all, awakening understanding and appreciation for the subject matter. Many years of sound German teaching in this sense would probably be of significant help in supporting a language requirement on our campuses. We are not in full control, of course: I would make a rough guess that at Illinois about two students study some other language for every one who studies German.

On this campus graduating seniors were asked to name their ten worst courses, and their ten best courses. It goes without saying that any such survey as this has its faults and that one must accept the results with a grain of salt, as one accepts the results of all statistical compilations. Still, one of the Romance languages on this

campus--I won't say which--managed to take four of the ten spots on the list of the worst courses. Students of this particular language have no doubt done a lot of complaining, and I'll bet their complaint was not about any one specific language, but about the language requirement.

Nevertheless, I feel that our justification for requiring students to take any subject must occur in the classrooms where that subject is taught. Many of us German teachers are European by birth; most of us are European by orientation. As a consequence, we have never really felt that language study had to be justified at all, and we have naturally preferred to use the classroom for getting about our business of learning the language. The Sputnik era encouraged us in this tendency of ours to feel that our sole purpose in the classroom was to inculcate proficiency and information. It is, therefore, understandable if we, when questioned now about rationale for language study, respond with what you call "superficial pragmatism." When we have not ourselves done much thinking about the significance of language study in the educational process, of course we are awkward in explaining it to others.

I do not feel that any skill or, for that matter, any body of data can be justified as such as an essential part of intellectual growth, hence I never have believed that students should be required to learn a language. I do, as an educator, feel that it is reasonable to require students in Liberal Arts and Sciences to give serious thought to the nature of language and to its importance for man alive. Although it is clearly necessary for the mature student to learn a language in order to attain the goal it has certainly been unfortunate that many of our language teachers have themselves lost sight of the goal, which is understanding and appreciation, not mere proficiency, however glib.

Sincerely,
your respectful

Harry

H. G. Haile
Head

HGH:as

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

University of Massachusetts

Amherst 01002

APR 2 1969

Germanic Lanugages

March 28, 1969

Mr. H. W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
American Assoc. of Teachers of German
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Dear Mr. Deeken:

Your request of March 21st for my opionion regarding the merits of retaining the College and University language requirements puts me on the spot. We here in Massachusetts are about to lose our requirement and have begun to resign ourselves to it. In our case, the retention of the language requirement will be up to the individual departments and most of them have already expressed their desire to keep it. This means that we will lose students and will have to reduce the size of our department, but not to an alarming extent. In this time and age, when the young people are fighting all requirements, I find it impossible to defend a requirement which is so obnoxious to many of them as the language requirement is. In many ways, I am sure we will find that the quality of our work will improve once the work in the language has been put on a different footing. I have heard of at least one instance where the enrollment actually went up after the language requirement had been dropped. I would not expect this to happen here, but I feel confident that the languages will retain a meaningful place in the University curriculum.

I have now been teaching for over thirty years in this country and I have seen many a move to do away with the language requirement. In every instance, however, foreign language study has had but a very short decline.This gives me a feeling of confidence. At the same time I find it futile to try to use the old arguments for the retention of the language requirement.

Our College of Arts and Sciences has set up a committee to study the role of the languages in a revised curriculum. The report has recently been released and I am enclosing a copy for your information. It is the result of more than twelve months of labor and I am afraid that it probably wasn't worth the time spent on it. We have to realize that the educational system in this country is facing a grave crisis, far greater than the question of whether or not the study of a foreign language should be required. What is at stake is the old concept of liberal education. We cannot fight for it with our old reasoning. I would not want to sound unduly fatalistic, but I am simply not convinced that we can go on as if nothing had happened.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Wolfgang Paulsen

Wolfgang Paulsen
Chairman

WP:mbn

Enclosure

APR 2 1969

MEMORANDUM

From: The Committee on Foreign Language Instruction February 25, 1969

To: Deans I. Moyer Hunsberger and John M. Maki

Subject: Recommendations on the Foreign Language Requirement in the College of Arts and Sciences

I. INTRODUCTION

In its deliberations since the beginning of the present academic year the Committee on Foreign Language Instruction has taken a fresh look at the concept of a foreign language requirement and at the position accorded foreign language study in the curriculum of the College of Arts and Sciences. Our basic premise is an assertion of the fundamental importance of the language arts in any contemporary and meaningful conception of education. By language arts we mean the ability of a human being to express himself or to communicate effectively.

The basic language arts for which educational systems are responsible involve a mastery of the student's mother tongue. Thus, in American colleges and universities English composition, speech, and rhetoric requirements have long been established and continue to serve valid ends for all students. However, in a modern world characterized by diversity, technological complexity, and disappearing geographical barriers, there are many other modes of communication and human expression, and effective and meaningful communication across language barriers is coming to be one of mankind's greatest problems. Educational institutions accordingly have a special responsibility to introduce all students to at least one of the modes of communication other than their mother tongues. Education and monolingualism are incompatible.

In addition to providing all students with skills in the use of at least one appropriate alternate language, educational institutions have a further responsibility in the area of language and communication arts: they must provide a meaningful and contemporary understanding of some of the complex and subtle technological, theoretical, psychological, and philosophical aspects of the general problem of human communication. In this context one can investigate a wide variety of modes of expression or communication such as audio, visual, and printed mass media, the visual arts, creative writing, conceptual mathematics, formal logic, and computer languages.

The proper subject of this paper, however, is the role of language arts when more strictly defined: in particular, the study of foreign languages in the liberal arts curriculum. We are concerned not only with foreign languages as tools of communication to be used by the student in travel abroad, reading, listening to the radio, or viewing foreign films. We are also concerned, and deeply so, with foreign language learning as in itself essentially a liberating and humanistic educational experience. This experience at its best can provide a unique kind of enlightenment, and in two directions. It can provide a means of crossing linguistic, national, and cultural barriers and of approaching an understanding of foreign countries, civilizations, and cultures. And, by opening new perspectives it can cause the student to reflect back upon himself, his language, and his culture. As the student learns a foreign mode of human expression he will simultaneously be learning something about himself and about humankind in general. It is in this way that the study of foreign languages makes its essential contribution to what has traditionally been called a humanistic educational experience.

It is in the context of these broad considerations of the importance of the language arts in a contemporary humanistic curriculum that we wish to formulate a new approach to the study of foreign languages and to the foreign language requirement in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Massachusetts.

II. LANGUAGE ARTS

All students entering the University have already had continued experience with language arts, yet they may have only a fragile awareness of the place of such arts in their total educational experience. The chances are good that the average student will have seen the language arts not as a whole or encompassing learning experience but rather as a series of specific segments of study the relationship of which may not be immediately clear. His most conscious and direct efforts in language will have been made in both English and foreign language classes, the latter being a new dimension of language study added at some point in the elementary or secondary school years. Under the title of English the matriculating student will

have had varying amounts of grammar, word study, oral and written composition, and literature. His study of a foreign language will have exposed him to a different system of sounds, structure, and meaning. He may even have come to appreciate how a foreign language gives him a completely different framework of communication, yet a framework interestingly comparable to his own mother tongue.

When the student arrives at the University, he will be expected to develop these beginning language skills. He will enter the new courses being designed by the Rhetoric Committee, where he will continue his study of the English language and continue to improve his skills in its use. The Foreign Language Committee wishes to suggest the following series of courses from which this same student should choose in order to continue his study of a second language or to add a third language.

1. The present four course foreign language sequence. Placement within the sequence will be determined by the score achieved on a placement test, and full credit will be granted regardless of previous language study in secondary school. The student may, if he wishes, enter the sequence one level lower than the one determined by the test. In such cases the student will receive credit but be graded on a pass-fail basis.

   It should be noted that if the entrance requirement is raised from two to three years of one foreign language, as recommended in part IV, A of this report, the great majority of students will place on entrance in 130 or 140, and increased numbers will be exempted altogether from further foreign language study. This four course sequence will aim at achieving proficiency of a certain pre-determined level in all four language skills (reading, writing, listening comprehension, speaking). It should be noted that tracks for majors, non-majors, honors students, and those in need of remedial work have been established in some languages on the 130-140 level.

2. Divisional reading options on the 130-140 level of the four course foreign language sequence. Placement will be the same as above. These courses will not aim at proficiency in the four skills but will instead concentrate on reading. The student may choose among three options or tracks according to his own interests and intended major. One track will be involved with readings in important original material in the foreign language relating to the humanities (literature, history, art, music, philosophy). A second track will read original foreign language material in the social sciences, and a third in the physical sciences. On the 130 level simple material of a popularized nature will be read, with an emphasis on development of reading skills. This will prepare for progressively more difficult material on the 140 level. These courses will be designed in cooperation with representatives from other departments.

to assure that the material read will be directly relevant to the needs of students in those departments. It is suggested that the appropriate track of this course be strongly recommended for majors in departments in the respective divisions and for possible divisional majors. Possibly some form of credit toward a major could be gained by taking the appropriate track in this sequence of foreign language courses. This would be a large step toward integrating the study of foreign languages with the major area of the student's education.

3. An intensive two semester language sequence. This would be an intensive course meeting eight to ten hours per week and receiving double credit (=12 hours for the two semester sequence). This sequence is primarily intended for students wishing to begin a new foreign language, but specially qualified students could enter in the middle of the sequence. Placement procedures would be the same as above. The course would be designed to lead to the same level of proficiency in all four skills as would be achieved in the normal four course foreign language sequence (1 above).

4. A semi-intensive two semester foreign language reading course. The first semester would be an intensive course meeting eight to ten hours per week and receiving 6 credits. It would concentrate on the learning of vocabulary, syntax, and representative structural patterns, accompanied by practice in pronunciation. Graded readings would be introduced as soon as possible, and by the end of the first semester by concentrating on reading skills alone the students would have achieved a level of proficiency that would allow them to continue in the second semester with the divisional reading option on the 130 or 140 level described in number 2 above. Placement at the one level or the other will depend on the recommendation of the instructor. This course would meet three times a week and receive three credits, and consequently this sequence as a whole is described as semi-intensive: double meetings and double credit first semester followed by regular meetings and regular credit second semester. This sequence is also primarily intended for students wishing to begin a new foreign language. Those with some previous experience of the given language would be admitted to the first semester of the sequence for full credit only if their placement test score indicated a 110 or 120 level. If it indicated a 130 level, credit would be granted only on a pass-fail basis.

We wish also to recommend that the Linguistics Program explore the possibility of establishing appropriate courses dealing with language that might serve as additional options.

It is proposed that these options be introduced without delay in whatever foreign language programs consider them practicable and have the necessary staff. We wish to invite all faculty members to suggest any other forms of foreign language instruction which might be of service to students on this campus.

In order to increase the foreign language options available to students in the College, we strongly support efforts presently being made to

expand the offerings in Oriental languages. At the same time we recommend the initiation of courses in one or more African languages, especially in the light of a new interest on this campus in Afro-American studies.

III. THE REQUIREMENT

In formulating the terms of an appropriate and viable foreign language requirement, the Committee has been guided by three considerations. First, in keeping with a general reduction of requirements in the curriculum of the College, the Committee wishes to make it possible for any student to fulfill his foreign language requirement in two semesters or less. Second, in harmony with the trend toward providing a series of alternatives rather than specific courses as requirements, the Committee wishes to provide the student with a series of options broad enough to assure that the educational experience involved in fulfilling the requirement may be relevant for every student. Third, in order to maintain the respectability and integrity of the degree of Bachelor of Arts granted to students completing the curriculum in the College of Arts and Sciences, we have decided unanimously in favor of retaining a college-wide or universal requirement administered by the College itself. We feel strongly that the abolition of such a requirement would be detrimental to the very existence of our College as an institution of liberal education and would lead the way to excessively departmentalized pre-professional specialization. We submit that if any requirements are to be retained in the College the foreign language requirement which we are proposing here is just as valid and viable as the rhetoric requirement, the literature requirement, the history-philosophy requirement, or the social and natural science requirements.

The foreign language requirement as we have designed it could be fulfilled in any of the following ways:

1. By attaining an approved score on the College Entrance Examination Board foreign language test taken in the senior year of high school. The approved score would be equivalent to the average score attained by students at the University of Massachusetts on a similar test taken on completion of the 140 level course in the foreign language. Students attaining exemption by this means will be awarded 6 advanced placement credits.

2. By attaining a similar score on a University administered placement or proficiency test. Depending on the language involved, this would be either a standardized or a departmentally devised test. It could

be taken during summer counseling prior to the student's arrival on campus for his freshman year, or it could be taken at officially designated times in the course of the school year. Students attaining exemption by this means will also be awarded 6 advanced placement credits.

3. By completing one of the sequences of foreign language study outlined in the above list on pages 3 or 4. Students admitted by placement test on the 140 level will receive 3 advanced placement credits if they complete the sequence with a grade of C or better. The options available to the student in the various tracks provided by these sequences will assure that the material studied will be relevant to all divisions and most departments.

These alternatives, we submit, provide flexibility, relevance, and a real choice among options, while at the same time assuring that students graduating from the College of Arts and Sciences will have had some substantial experience with foreign language arts.

At the same time we wish to suggest that individual departments might formulate more stringent recommendations or requirements for their own students and that they might grant some form of credit toward fulfillment of requirements for the major to students who continue work in foreign languages beyond the minimal College requirement. Students majoring in the humanities might be urged or required to take a semester or a year course in a foreign literature above the 140 level. Those majoring in certain areas of the humanities might be urged or required to take Latin in addition to a modern foreign language. Students in some areas of science and mathematics might be urged or required to attain a reading knowledge of two or even three modern foreign languages. The divisional reading options described on pages 3 and 4 will assure that acquisition of such a reading knowledge may be attained as efficiently as possible and that the efforts expended will be directly relevant to the student's research interests. The Committee on Foreign Language Instruction welcomes any suggestions for making the teaching of foreign languages on this campus more meaningful and useful for students in the various departments of the College.

IV. COROLLARY RECOMMENDATIONS

A. The Entrance Requirement

This Committee is vitally concerned with the extent, the nature, and the quality of foreign language instruction in the Commonwealth's secondary

schools. Another committee within the language departments has been working at the complex task of improving instruction on the secondary level and has to date made some progress which is soon to affect teacher training at the University. The present Committee expects to become fully involved in these efforts to upgrade the teaching of foreign languages.

The Committee wishes now to recommend a policy limited to a specific period of time which it believes will create a long term effect in helping the high schools turn out students who are already proficient in a given foreign language, or nearly so, when they apply for admission to the University. The Committee recommends that the entrance requirement for the College of Arts and Sciences be raised from two to three years of one foreign language. It is suggested that this requirement become effective four years after adoption for a five year period. In the nine year span indicated by this proposal the high schools of the Commonwealth will have had sufficient time to raise the level and improve the quality of their foreign language instruction. Another result of this recommendation is that the University would gradually reduce the number of skills courses in foreign languages as the proficiency of its entering freshmen increases. Finally, there would be a substantial increase in the number of students exempted by College Boards or placement test from further required study of foreign languages at the University.

B. Counseling

The Committee further recommends that increased efforts be made by the College and by the departments to acquaint entering freshmen with the nature and the rationale of the requirements that they will be expected to fulfill. We believe that it is the responsibility of the College to assure that each student understands the purpose of the requirements it has adopted. The students should be made more aware than they have been in the past of how the requirements are designed to shape their educational experience, and, equally importantly, of how the new options which the students are being offered help them shape their own educational experience in the light of their own individual interests and objectives. Increased counseling and guidance services are needed to help the student make an intelligent choice among the options presented to him. It is to be hoped that by thus being allowed a more active hand in planning their own education the students will be better motivated and more directly engaged in the particular learning

experience they will choose for themselves.

C. Conclusion: A Foreign Language-Rhetoric Requirement

These recommendations of the Foreign Language Committee were premised on the assertion of the fundamental importance of the language arts in modern education. We have noted at several points a close relationship between our own concerns and those of the Rhetoric Committee, and we have been viewing the shared concerns of our two committees in the encompassing perspective of language arts. We have re-formulated the foreign language requirement in terms broader than ever before so as to make it as significant as possible for all the divisions and departments and students in the College. In order to bring about a rapprochement that would be in keeping with the essential philosophic perspective on which these recommendations have been based, the Foreign Language Committee wishes to suggest the possibility of combining the rhetoric and foreign into a single one that would be fulfilled by completing the requirements proposed by our respective committees. An appropriate name for the combined requirement would be a matter for discussion between the two committees. At the moment we would merely suggest the phrase Language Arts Requirement. Such a combined requirement would make the students more aware of the essential unity underlying these two areas of study, thus leading them to appreciate more fully the linguistic basis of the humanities.

Respectfully submitted by the Committee on Foreign Language Instruction:

Robert L. Bancroft
Micheline Dufau
Peter Fischer
Nancy Lamb
Gilbert Lawall
Maurice Levin
Albert Reh
Irving P. Rothberg, Chairman
Harold L. Smith, Jr.
Thomas F. Sousa
Zina Tillona

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN

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APR 7 1969

April 1, 1969

Mr. H. W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
American Association of Teachers of German
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Dear Mr. Deeken:

In answer to your request of March 21st for some thoughts on the problem of the abolition of the foreign language requirement, I must say immediately that this is a difficult letter to write. Difficult because most of my arguments, and I suspect that this is true for the majority of my colleagues, are not particularly pragmatic, and therefore especially vulnerable to attack by most of those who wish to do away with the requirement.

Very little of what I may say here will be original; most of it has been far better expressed elsewhere by the late William Riley Parker. There is, first of all, the argument that too much time is spent on foreign languages in college, that the result does not justify the time devoted to the requirement. This is perhaps the most difficult argument of all to refute, if indeed it can be refuted, because it is unfortunately true that, from the practical point of view, many college catalogues make exaggerated or unrealistic claims for what one or even two years of language study can accomplish. Nevertheless, the mere fact of being exposed to a new discipline, one which can make the student realize that his is not the only method of expression, is in itself useful. If we wish to turn our colleges and universities into vocational schools, where practical skills become the only concern, then by all means let us do away with languages. Let us also do away with English and American literature. We might even consider doing away with mathematics, since I think it highly unlikely that a compulsory course in mathematics will make someone a better musician. And we may as well do away with social science requirements, because it is by no means apparent to me that a course in psychology is going to make a man a better chemist. I do not think that these arguments are specious, although I realize there is an inherent danger in them, especially when we think that this could contribute to the abolition of all requirements, which of course is the goal of a number, however small, of militant students and faculty.

We should all be aware of Parker's argument that the relevance of a program of foreign language study to a given department is beside the point. What is important is its place in and contribution to a liberal arts program. Those who are against it in effect either oppose or totally misunderstand the liberal arts, and if this is what they really want, then it seems to me that the whole concept of liberal arts education must be changed, if not destroyed.

Whether the requirement is for a second language or for anything else, I think we have to look at the positive, rather than the negative side of it and in addition look at the long run, often intangible advantages, despite the tremendous pressures to see everything from a practical, pragmatic, and specialized point of view.

Yours sincerely,

Ian C. Loram

Ian C. Loram
Chairman

ICL:rz

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
University of Massachusetts-Boston
100 Arlington Street, Boston 02116
TELEPHONE (617) 542-6500

APR 7 1969

Mr. H. W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
American Association of Teachers of German
National Office
339 Walnut Street,
Philadelphia, PA. 19106

April 2nd, 1969

Dear Mr. Deeken:

One cannot discuss a foreign language requirement for college undergraduates without asking what a college education is supposed to represent. To the latter question there are probably as many answers as there are people providing them. Nevertheless it would be fair to say that a large number of educators, professors and administrators, if asked what a freshly minted B.A. recipient should represent, would surely speak of a "liberal education", an "open mind", a "sense of alternatives", and so forth.

Such phrases now threaten to become clichés but I still find them persuasive. Living and teaching in a time when the most fundamental premises are under challenge, and being forced constantly to reappraise my fondest notions about education -- this all to the good -- have not altered my conviction that the understanding of people, both individually and collectively, whether fellow-citizens or foreigners in distant countries, is fundamental to the educational process.

The quest for understanding is of course a never-ending adventure that has fascinated homo sapiens ever since he dimly attained self-awareness. This quest, out of which civilization has developed, has been shared by people of many lands and many cultures. To study the history of this quest, to recognize and define one's own role in it and to attempt to further it are also, it seems to me, a part of becoming educated.

If it is true then that the quest for understanding is an impulse common to all men and not unique to one nation or culture, then it behooves one to study other nations and other cultures. The point is that such study cannot be undertaken from the

vantage-point of one's own language and one's own culture. Is it possible to really fathom the depths of Greek civilization without knowing Greek? What understanding can one gain of French history without knowing French? Can you imagine anyone pretending to appreciate the marvels of Shakespeare without knowing English? If it is true -- and who would deny it? -- that a nation's culture, its style and substance and character, are uniquely manifest in its language, how can a person profess to be educated, i.e. to have some understanding of unfamiliar peoples, inter alia, if he is not able to transcend the narrow bonds of his own language?

I ask of those who profess a belief in the importance of a liberal education but would abolish the requirement of foreign language study: Search your conscience. Is your stand a matter of conviction or of expediency? Are you motivated by deeper insight or are you capitulating to the insistence of earnest but callow undergraduates? In short, is your intellectual integrity still intact?

We all know that there is no royal road to the mastery of foreign languages, and we who teach them are especially frustrated by our inability, despite all the hard efforts of the past decade, to develop truly more efficient and effective ways of performing our task. But let us not throw out the baby with the bath-water. In a time of changing values, let us have the wisdom to recognize those qualities which we need to preserve and let us have the courage and the strength to fight for their preservation.

Sincerely yours,

Alfred Hoelzel

Alfred Hoelzel
Chairman, Dept. of German

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02154

DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC
AND SLAVIC LANGUAGES

APR 7 1969

April 2, 1969

Dr. H. W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
American Association of Teachers of German
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Dear Dr. Deeken:

I am glad to have the opportunity to give you some of my thoughts about the language requirement at American institutions of higher learning.

My eighteen years on the faculty of Brandeis University as well as several years of teaching at Harvard and Clark University have convinced me that the language requirement has not only lost none of its intrinsic value but ought to be strengthened wherever and whenever possible. Brandeis has a comparatively strong requirement, one that is quantitative rather than qualitative. It is a requirement that includes not only the study of a foreign language, but a year's introduction to literary masterworks written, read, and often discussed in that language. In practice, to be sure, few students take three years of a foreign language here, unless they choose a language in addition to the one in which they have met the language and literature requirement--possibly one that opens more academic and cultural doors to them and is especially useful in graduate study. More and more freshmen come with such good preparation in foreign languages that they are placed in a third-year language-literature course or even in a lecture course entirely or largely in the foreign language.

In the past, the language requirement at Brandeis has come under attack from unsympathetic members of other departments who feel that linguistic skills and literature studies ought to be improved or carried on in the student's native English and that the requirement of taking the equivalent of three years of a foreign language and literature takes valuable time away from, say, laboratory work in the sciences or field work in the social sciences. That the administration has not been entirely sympathetic to our field is evidenced by the fact that the approximately twenty areas of graduate study at Brandeis do not as yet include any European language or literature. The term "tool courses" has been applied to language instruction by a top administrator. In that sense--which I regard as too narrow for the liberal-arts benefits to be derived from such study--tutorials in German, French, Russian, and Spanish are currently being given to graduate students preparing for reading examinations.

Like most aspects of "general education", the language requirement sooner or later is bound to come up for review in most American institutions of higher learning. I am not among those who question the "relevance" of foreign-language studies in our age. Rather, I feel that the language requirement, if it is well thought out and efficiently administered, is one of the great forces making for literacy and sensitivity among our students and ought to be preserved and strengthened.

Sincerely yours,

Harry Zohn
Chairman

HZ/hd

APR 7 1969

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

BERKELEY · DAVIS · IRVINE · LOS ANGELES · RIVERSIDE · SAN DIEGO · SAN FRANCISCO · SANTA BARBARA · SANTA CRUZ

DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720

4 April 1969

Mr. H. W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
American Association of Teachers of German
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Dear Mr. Deeken:

Thank you very much for your letter of 21 March 1969 concerning the retention of the college and university language requirements. I feel deeply pessimistic on the subject and think that the most we can accomplish at present is a stop-gap measure which would delay the dropping of the foreign language requirement for a couple of years.

We are now engaged in a battle on our campus to retain the language requirement, and I shall inform you of the results of our efforts. A committee is in existence on this campus at present which is forwarding to the faculty of the College of Letters and Science a proposed "improved curriculum" for the consideration of our faculty. I understand from members of that committee that in their proposal they will indeed suggest the dropping of the foreign language requirement. We have provided that committee with all the ammunition we can in order to sway them to a more favorable reaction. However, as I say, I am extremely pessimistic of the results.

I am forwarding to you herewith the first draft of a statement by Dean Cyril Birch, a memberof our Oriental language department. I think it is a rather well thought out statement and is one of the materials which we are using for the lobbying which we are doing in the committee. I am sure Dean Birch would be happy to see you put it to whatever good use you can. If you wish to correspond with him, his address would be, of course, the department of Oriental languages on this campus. If there is anything further we might do, please do not hesitate to write.

Sincerely,

Blake Lee Spahr

Blake Lee Spahr
Chairman

BLS/vls

Encl.

Any attempt to define the "educated man" faces awe-inspiring difficulties. Most of us, though, if we were asked to describe such a man's accomplishments, would place the knowledge of at least one language other than his own fairly high on the list. Perhaps we are over-impressed by an image of the sophisticated European (blessed by the advantage of birth in Sweden or Switzerland) who moves with ease through an international congress, uses telling quotes from half-a-dozen languages in his research papers and exudes a general air of cosmopolitan glamor in his cocktail-party conversation. Are students and teachers alike really taking an inappropriate model here as they plough through fourth quarter Spanish? Or do they have a vision of something much more fundamental to the development of the mind? I believe they do - and I use the word "believe" because I suspect this is a realm which is not hospitable to objective verification.

What the study of a second language offers is an understanding of the nature of language as such, a sensitivity to language, to its power and its limitations. There are things about English that one cannot learn in English. Not even the techniques of linguistics - as long as the linguist himself uses English - can force the bars of the prison in which our native language traps our thought. A language has its genius, the cultural genius of its community. It has its untranslateable concepts: ennui, or Gemütlichkeit, or the phenomenon we translate from Chinese as "face" but which becomes more comprehensible only when we collect all the Chinese phrases that relate to "losing face", "wanting face", "giving face." A simple phrase in another language can detonate the imagination as no translation can. John Osborne knew this when he had the cast of Luther march downstage singing "Ein' feste/ Bu-urg ist u-unser Gott" - a tremendous moment in the theater, when suddenly the mind fills with the pathos of the doomed yearnings.

So far so good. But how many foreign languages do we have to learn to possess ourselves of this delectable boon? The answer, really, is one. Spanish, after all, can open up the entire Western Hemisphere; French or German, much of the Atlantic community; Chinese or Japanese the Pacific. Americans are being educated to be

with this kind of consideration[2].

members of the community. American relations in all fields are world-wide: the only community big enough for an educated American today is the world. But we are reaching the area of the practical advantages of language-learning. These are obvious enough (travel, cultural benefits, use of research materials). But they are secondary; if practical advantage, and not the liberation of the mind, were all we were seeking we should be out of the world of college education and into that of the trade-school, Berlitz, or the graduate reading examinations.

The problem of language work in college is the problem of the actual nature of the process. Students resent the boring mechanical exercises, the low intellectual level of asking the way to the railroad station. Some of the common complaints probably contain a lot of nonsense. We make a great mistake to think that the development of the mind, even in college, demands a constant flow of great ideas - that Western Civilization is somehow more intellectually respectable than German 1. True, language teachers have a long way to go in improving their methods. They could cut down the boredom factor by simply using better materials. They still oscillate between the old evil of decoding (grammar + vocabulary = understanding of what the idiot sentence means), and the new evil of fluency first. (Not so new an evil at that: when Longfellow became professor of French, German, Italian and Spanish at Bowdoin in 1825 he engaged native speakers to impart perfect accents to his students while he taught the courses in literature). Probably there has been too strong a swing towards the oral-aural, the audio-visual and what not: students don't read enough, or early enough. But whether listening, speaking, reading or writing, the learner is involved one way or another in the essential process: the painful, time-consuming but ultimately invaluable accumulation of tiny sensibilities from another culture.

One may accept the advantages and be not too unhappy with the process, and still worry that four quarters are not going to equip the student with any useful degree of competence. It would be so good if the second language, the all-important first foreign language, could be thrust back into the high school. In fact this is happening more and more, even though the University entrance requirement is still held down to two years of high school foreign language. But is the fourth quarter

level adequate - after all that effort, isn't one still short of the goal? In this connection, the Foreign Service of the U.S. uses an interesting definition of "useful" knowledge of a foreign language: the ability to handle everyday speech, to read a newspaper, and to read and discuss a technical article in one particular field. If the fourth quarter can be viewed as a springboard rather than a terminus, then we can see that no great distance remains before this level of competence can be reached. One of the main aims of the fourth quarter course should be to encourage the student to continue on into the fifth - of his own free will. The Parthian shot: "But why require a foreign language? Why not leave it to choice? People who feel they need one will learn one - in their own good time." Here, of course, we enter swirling currents of educational philosophy. The answer would involve the dangers of letting rust grow on what was learned in high school, the loss of flexibility with increasing age, the need for some bulwark against the urge to give up. Obviously there aren't many of us, with the best will in the world, who can summon up the kind of determination that starts a diary on January 1 and keeps it up much beyond February 15. A requirement is an irksome but valuable substitute for that particular kind of will-power. It is an evil only if it is inhumanly applied - if it does not recognize, for example, the very rare and special case of the man who just can't learn a foreign language.

Precisely what combination of logic, mathematics and aesthetics would one prescribe for the man who had tried hard, and failed miserably, to acquire any language other than his own? This is a good question to work on, for the very difficulty one encounters in answering it points up the unique contribution of foreign language study to the breadth, the imagination, the literacy of the educated man.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
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AREA 212 777-2000

Department of German

APR 9 1969

April 7, 1969

Professor Hans W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
American Association of Teachers of German
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Dear Professor Deeken:

Professor Sander has asked me to thank you for your letter of March 21, and to state some of the thoughts we have on the language requirements at the College and University level.

We feel that in order to make a degree in the humanities such as the B.A. meaningful, acquaintance with some other culture through a study of its language is imperative. We therefore insist on minimal proficiency in any way he can: High School training, private tutoring, or even a foreign language background in the home, etc. At NYU-WSC this means that the undergraduate has to take a placement test and show evidence that he has reached the proficiency level of four semesters of College German. Otherwise he is placed into the appropriate course.

A second and more pragmatic reason for wanting to retain the language requirement on the College level is the fact that with a four-semester-proficiency the student, perhaps with some additional practice, will be able to pass the Graduate language examinations which many departments still require for the M.A. and the Ph.D. Our

own experience with German Graduate language examinations in various disciplines shows that those who have a solid undergraduate training not only write far superior examinations, but are more likely later on to read in the original German. Unfortunately, there are not many who can do this. Most students -- lacking the solid foundation which they would have acquired at the undergraduate level -- manage to learn some German by "cramming" for the Graduate language examination. This helps them barely to pass. Soon afterwards the scanty German they have is forgotten thus precluding their using the foreign language in their own field.

Another reason for requiring foreign language proficiency on the undergraduate level is the prospect that it might lead some students to majoring in that language. But in order to reach a significant achievement level -- as we know from experience -- language learning must be made compulsory.

Hopefully the day may come when the student will have reached proficiency by the time he enters college. This of course would mean reshaping the pre-college programs by intensifying the instruction of German on the High School level, or even better by starting the study of the foreign language at an earlier age (10 or earlier) as envisioned by the FLES Program. It would finally mean instituting courses in the less popular languages such as German in the many public and private High Schools in the country which do not have them so far. Until then the colleges have to carry the major burden of teaching German to interested students. But in order to make the learning significant some sort of pressure must be exercised either by course requirements or by a proficiency test.

I hope that the thoughts outlined above may be of some use to you in your survey.

Sincerely,

Doris S. Guilloton

Doris S. Guilloton,
Acting Chairman
Department of Germanic
Languages and Literatures

DSG:gn

YALE UNIVERSITY
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

APR 11 1969

DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES

9 April 1969

Mr. H.W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF GERMAN
National Office
339 Walnut St.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Dear Mr. Deeken:

Thank you very much for your welcome inquiry of March 21, 1969. I can assure you that the question of language requirements (or rather the consequences of dismantling them) has long been on our mind here and I should be glad to suggest a few thoughts shared by most members of our department.

Perhaps I should say first that distribution requirements have been abolished at Yale three years ago and that the results were far less catastrophical than many of us feared. Losses in student elections varied from department to department and while we have experienced a certain decrease in student numbers (above 20%) in the last two years, we believe that we are now reaching a definite point of reconsolidation. We feel that we have been compensated for our losses by a new sense of purpose, courses better defined than before and a coherent group of highly motivated and intelligent students. The necessity to compete with other departments in an open field has been a wholesome experience for us because it forced us, in a concrete way, to design challenging courses rather than Pflichtübungen.

The Director of Undergraduate Studies in our department strongly believes that elementary language courses should be seen in the whole context of the learning of foreign language, literature, and culture. There is good reason to think that this entire structure would collapse with disaccreditation, and furthermore, that the example would be disastrous for the whole cause of foreign languages, the fantastic labors of the last twenty years would be reduced to nought.

The main reason for this is that for all but a small proportion of gifted enthusiasts, language learning is one of the most tedious, time-consuming, and dissatisfying experiences of undergraduate education, despite many pedagogical achievements in making the process more attractive and fulfilling.

Reasonably motivated students submit to this discomfort because of a rational awareness of the value of the goal. But to take away credit, when the college offers for credit so many infinitely more rewarding experiences, would be likely to weaken this motivation considerably. To give credit is not so much a bribe as a sign of respect for the labor and discipline required of a student in doing what, by some measure of common consent, is useful and valuable.

Under a situation of disaccreditation, it is probable that the only foreign literature department that could maintain itself in the college would be French. The struggles of Russian and the vital exotic languages would be sadly damaged. German, Italian, and Spanish would either disappear or be reduced to a status something like that of Egyptology, in which a single professor, with some assistance, could meet the spontaneous needs. Within a very few years critical effects would begin to be felt in the advanced study of the humanities, and the movement to a monolingually educated society, which Deweyism threatened two generations ago, would be accelerated. It is too bad that the keystone of foreign language education is located in the colleges, where it does not belong, but it is the fact, and the removal of the stone will bring down the whole edifice.

A point that could be taken under advisement would be the offering of non-credit courses in reading skills. No reputable language professional regards this as language teaching, but it has its uses in providing decoding skills that have purely practical purposes; the backbone of the Summer Language Institute in the major languages is courses of this kind, and it is significant that the Institute refuses to certify them for credit. But to make them competitive with genuine language courses by disaccrediting the latter would have a Greshman's Law effect of serious consequences.

Another one of our staff members very much concerned with elementary language courses stresses the intrinsic values of such courses in addition to their function in transmitting skills. Only un-contrastive foreign language beginners' courses are devoid of intellectual content. Modern ones of the post-audio-lingual variety need not be. They should instead reflect the contemporary state of language learning possibilities which could be gauged by the emerging ancillary subject of Psycho-Linguistics. Contrary to bias, the learning of foreign languages, and the appreciation of foreign, or even domestic, literatures, is not a constant, but rather an evolving process, open to scientific inquiry.

Both senior and junior members of our department agree that fundamental language courses add to shaping the qualitative sensibilities of young people who are to live in a world of predominantly quantitative structures and essentially frees their mind from a parochialism of both the geographical and the ontological kind. " Even a first year course, if well designed and well taught, can lead a student out of the mental and cultural parochialism which derives from the belief, with which we all begin, that there is only one way of expressing the world, one way of formulating concepts: that words and things are of the same order. A simple initiation in a foreign language may teach new perspectives on the way the mind can work; it may affect one's attitudes toward his mental and cultural conditioning. It can set in motion the process of dissociation and distancing from one's own cultural experience which is necessary to any study of culture ." (Professor Nelson Brooks, Department of French, Yale University).

With my best wishes for the work of the American Association of Teachers of German,

Yours sincerely,

Peter Demetz
Chairman

PD:rh

Under a situation of disaccreditation, it is probable that the only foreign literature department that could maintain itself in the college would be French. The struggles of Russian and the vital exotic languages would be sadly damaged. German, Italian, and Spanish would either disappear or be reduced to a status something like that of Egyptology, in which a single professor, with some assistance, could meet the spontaneous needs. Within a very few years critical effects would begin to be felt in the advanced study of the humanities, and the movement to a monolingually educated society, which Deweyism threatened two generations ago, would be accelerated. It is too bad that the keystone of foreign language education is located in the colleges, where it does not belong, but it is the fact, and the removal of the stone will bring down the whole edifice.

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With my best wishes for the work of the American Association of Teachers of German,

Yours sincerely,

Peter Demetz
Chairman

PD:rh

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
TUCSON, ARIZONA 85721
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN AND RUSSIAN

APR 16 1969

April 14, 1969

Mr. Hans W. Deeken
Executive Secretary, AATG
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Dear Mr. Deeken:

I do not believe that, except for a relatively small number of students (prospective teachers, translators, interpreters, etc.), foreign language study as a general requirement can be defended on purely pragmatic or utilitarian grounds. Nor can, for that matter, the study of English literature, of philosophy, of history, and of other humanistic subjects. And we might as well chuck it all and limit our efforts to vocational training if we insist on measuring the value of education in dollars and cents.

But if education means more than a way to greater individual success and material profits, if it is to have a civilizing effect by making its recipients more universally responsive (and responsible) to the world in which they live, then certainly the study of language, whether of our own or foreign, must occupy an essential place in the curriculum.

Among all other living beings, man is unique for being able to think and to reflect on his feelings, communicate his thoughts and feelings, broaden thus his understanding, and, on the basis of the understanding thus gained, establish a relationship to his kind which we call civilized or ethical. And man's specific and foremost instrument of thought and subsequent communication and understanding, in fact his distinguishing trait as a human being, is his language.

If language (generally, not just our own) then plays such a central role in human affairs, even to the extent that every speaker-listener relationship is fraught with profound ethical implications, if in fact (and this according to modern anthropologists and evolutionists) language makes man what he is, then the improvement or broadening of our linguistic capacity must certainly be among the primary objectives of our educational efforts; and this would have to include, among other things and to some extent, becoming acquainted with the way other, foreign, people express their thoughts and feelings. By refusing to accommodate ourselves in any way to the speech of others or adjust our speech to their ability to understand, we reject them, shut them out, and set ourselves apart in an arrogant and even hostile manner.

We thereby pronounce judgment on ourselves as we reveal our willingness to remain selfishly narrow, provincial, in fact uncivilized ("satisfied pigs" rather than aspiring human beings, according to John Stuart Mill) and thus contribute to a progressive and progressively dangerous fragmentation of the human society.

While we Americans pride ourselves in our democratic ways, we turn around and violate, by our reluctance or opposition to foreign language study, the most basic principle of democracy by ignoring or disdaining our fellow-man's most sacred right, the very mark of his humanity, his language. Far too long have we Americans been guilty of, and offending through, this sin of omission.

I add the following merely as a way of illustrating what I have tried to say above: Even one single phrase (such as: "Ich bin ein Berliner!") uttered in the language of the listeners can evoke the enthusiastic response and good will of a whole people.

I also remember Ambassador Conant addressing the German people over the radio, shortly after the war, in a German that may have sounded pretty atrocious. But to the surprise of interviewing American reporters, his German listeners were neither shocked nor insulted by this assault on their language; on the contrary, they were elated and deeply grateful: "He is the first foreign diplomat to have spoken to us in our own language."

I also recall the American colonel in the train from Cologne to Paris who spoke neither German nor French and could only with haughty (or was it embarrassed?) silence, and to the amusement or consternation of his fellow-passengers, point to his papers when first German and then French border officials came through the train. In a conversation afterwards he revealed to me that he was a member of some commission engaged in introducing democracy among the Germans and thus create a basis for future relations with our country. To me it seemed like an absolute contradiction in terms: Initiation of a process of democratisation by persons unable to utter a single phrase in the language of those whom they expected to pursuade or convert to our concept of democracy.

Sincerely yours,

F. J. Schmitz

F. J Schmitz, Professor of German
(Retired Head of the German-Russian Department)

FLS:dl

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03824

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
Department of German and Russian
Verrette House

APR 16 1969

April 15, 1969

An Herrn
Hans W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
American Association of Teachers of German, Inc.
National Office
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Sehr geehrter Herr Deeken!

In Nachfolge meines Zwischenbescheids vom 2. April ds. Js. sehe ich mich jetzt in der Lage, Ihnen ein abgerundetes Bild der an der hiesigen Universität bestehenden Auffassungen über die Pflichtvorlesungen in fremden Sprachen zu geben, indem ich Ihnen nicht nur die Meinung der Deutschen Abteilung darstelle, sondern auch die Reaktion von anderen führenden Abteilungen innerhalb der Universität geben kann.

Soweit es die deutsche Abteilung angeht, seien nachfolgende Gesichtspunkte angeführt:

1. In der deutschen Abteilung der Universität New Hampshire sind augenblicklich etwa 300 Studenten in den Anfängerkursen eingetragen. Das Gros belegt die Vorlesung, um den Anforderungen der Universitätsregeln zu genügen. Jedoch muß berücksichtigt werden, daß die Abteilung aus der Masse dieser Studenten ihre zukünftigen Germanisten rekrutiert. Wenn aber der deutschen Abteilung von vornherein die Möglichkeit entzogen würde, das Interesse an der deutschen Sprache und Literatur überhaupt zu wecken, würde dies den hiesigen Verhältnissen entsprechend einen Rückgang von 75% der mit Deutsch als Hauptfach eingetragenen Studenten bedeuten.
Da die Anfänger vorwiegend von Lehrassistenten unter Leitung eines erfahrenen Studienleiters unterrichtet werden, ist leicht einzusehen, daß durch die Abschaffung der Fremdsprachen als Pflichtfach auch das Studium für Graduierte schwer getroffen würde.

2. Es ist in der Abteilung in eindeutiger Weise festgestellt worden, daß eine erhebliche Anzahl

der Studenten sich nicht mit den amtlich festgelegten Anforderungen begnügten, sondern das Sprachstudium - nachdem das Interesse dafür einmal geweckt war - für ein oder zwei Jahre auf freiwilliger Grundlage fortsetzten. Dies gilt in besonderem Maß für Studenten, die Musik, Philosophie, Theologie, Psychologie oder Natruwissenschaften als Hauptfach haben.

3. Alle Abteilungen der Universität mit einem Doktor-Programm verlangen als Vorprüfung zumindest eine Fremdsprache, einige sogar zwei. Es besteht durchaus die Absicht, diese Sprachprüfungen auch weiterhin an der Universität New Hampshire beizubehalten.

4. Es ist ein offenes Geheimnis, daß die amerikanischen Oberschulen aus vielerlei Gründen noch nicht in der Lage sind, den Fremdsprachen-Unterricht so zu betreiben, wie es unsere moderne Zeit, in der sich Grenzen und Raum verdichten, erfordert. Solange die Oberschulen dieser Verpflichtung nicht nachkommen können, müssen die Universitäten nach wie vor einspringen. Es ist schlechthin unmöglich, in eine fremde Kultur einzudringen, ohne deren Sprache zu verstehen. Und die politischen wie auch die ökonomischen Gründe zur Erlernung einer Fremdsprache sind so offensichtlich, daß sie kaum einer Erwähnung bedürfen.

Vor Jahrhunderten hielten die europäischen Universitäts-Professoren ihre Vorlesungen in Latein; Humboldt korrespondierte in 60 verschiedenen Sprachen und Bismarck lernte Russisch in drei Monaten. Heute gibt es wohl kaum einen europäischen Universitätsprofessor, der nicht wenigstens eine Fremdsprache beherrscht. Sollten wir in Amerika lernfrohen und weltaufgeschlossenen, jungen Menschen wirklich die Gelegenheit entziehen wollen, Fremdsprachen zu lernen?

H. Reske

Dr. Hermann W. Reske
Professor of German

Anlagen: 4

Briefe von: Department of Philosophy
Department of Microbiology
Department of Music
Department of Psychology

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Campus Correspondence

April 14, 1969

MEMORANDUM

TO: Professor Herman Reske, German Department

FROM: Professor Robert P. Sylvester, Chairman, Department of Philosophy

SUBJECT: Language Requirement

For traditional degrees in the academic world, I mean by that the B.A., the M.A., and the Ph.D. in the discipline of Philosophy, requirements for knowing (reading and writing) a foreign language are essential. The literature which one must be aware of includes important texts in the major world languages. I do not see that abandoning language requirements would do anything other than cut down the possibilities for a student becoming aware of problems and questions in Philosophy.

Robert P. Sylvester
Chairman
Department of Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Campus Correspondence April 9, 1969

Dr. Hermann W. Reske
Department of German and Russian
Verrette House
Campus

Dear Hermann:

This is to document my support for the need for courses in German and other foreign languages for our undergraduate and graduate students majoring in the field of Microbiology.

I feel that such courses are a valuable part of the cultural background of our students and are necessary to enable our graduate students to translate scientific papers in foreign journals. Our students are still required to have a reading knowledge of scientific literature in two foreign languages as part of the requirement for the Ph.D. degree in Microbiology.

Sincerely yours,

L. W. Slanetz, Chairman
Department of Microbiology

f

University of New Hampshire
Department of Music
Durham, New Hampshire
April 15, 1969

To: Dr. Hermann Reske
Department of German and Russian

From: Donald E. Steele
Department of Music

Re: Necessity of music students studying German

It is essential that German be taught to students majoring in music for the following reasons:

1. The main stream of music since 1700 has been in Germany and in Austria. A knowledge of the language makes it possible to read treatises and articles written by Bach, Schumann, and Mozart, among others.

2. At the graduate level, German is a required language for a master's degree. Such source books as Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, and Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Austria and in Germany have never been translated into English and are essential reference material for graduate study.

3. Newly printed Urtext editions, such as those published by Bärenreiter of Kassel, of Mozart, Bach, Schubert, Beethoven, give us the most recent scholarship in their critical reports. These are only printed in German.

4. In the United States it is almost invariably the rule that operas be sung in their original language, while in the art of lieder singing the German language is essential without exception. It is only false and not real when a singer sings according to phonetics and does not understand the words. Thus in the training of singers a knowledge of German is essential. The case is similar with tempo indications which are given in German, beginning with Beethoven.

5. Finally, a knowledge of German in its grammatical usage as a way of thinking does give some indication of German mind in its discipline and methodology. It is at least desirable that a musician obtain more than a superficial knowledge of German thought, procedures, and the deeper the understanding of German culture the better.

Donald E. Steele

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03824

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
Department of Psychology
Conant Hall

April 15, 1969

Dr. Herman Reske
Chairman, Department of German
Hamilton Smith Hall
University of New Hampshire
Durham, N.H. 03824

Dear Dr. Reske:

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance to us of the availability of German as a foreign language, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. For our undergraduates, it is important that they have the opportunity to obtain the cultural breadth that is provided by courses in German, as well as to develop their skills in the language for later use in the study of the scientific literature of psychology.

For our graduate students, it is particularly important that German be available. We require only one foreign language, but expect that the graduate student will demonstrate a high level of competence in its use. German is of special importance, not only because of the wide range of classical scientific literature in psychology that appears in German, but also because a significant amount of current contributions to the field continues to appear in German.

Sincerely yours,

Raymond L Erickson

Raymond L. Erickson
Chairman

RLE/fr

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03824

APR 18 1969

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
Department of Political Science

14 April 1969

Profes.or Herman Reske
Department of German and Russian
University of New Hampshire

Dear Professor Reske:

In response to your inquiry concerning language study requirements at colleges and universities, I offer some comments below. I am not speaking for the whole department, since I have not had time to consult my colleagues. I can state, however, that the department recently reviewed its requirements for the M.A. degree (at present the highest degree offered by this department) and voted that knowledge of a foreign language would be required of candidates when such knowledge was considered appropriate for their graduate program and research--e.g. a student specializing in European politics would have to demonstrate reading capacity in a foreign language appropriate to his study. To this requirement was added a similar one in the case of students mainly oriented toward survey and quantitative approaches to the study of political behavior: demonstration of knowledge of certain techniques appropriate to this type of study. The previous M.A. requirement had been that all candidates would be required to demonstrate reading competence in a foreign language. The arguments of the proponents of these changes--who constituted a majority--was that the previous universal requirement was too undif.erentiated,and that one could not compel students to take interest in foreign language study. The department has taken no position on undergraduate foreign language requirements.

My own view is that study of a foreign language by undergraduates should be a requirement, but I do not always agree with the arguments of some proponents of this view. I believe the central problem to be that one relatively rarely encounters a student at the undergraduate level (or even at higher levels) who has a useful mastery of a foreign tongue. I am not sure of the reasons for this, except that I think it has something to do with the tendency in American high schools and colleges for students to pick up a smattering of two or more foreign languages, rather than concentrating on one for longer periods of study. It certainly also has something to do--at least in my discipline--with the relative rarity of faculty in mastery of foreign tongues. Finally, it may also have something to do,

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03824

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
Department of Political Science

as regards the social sciences, with what I take to frequently be the literary emphasis of language training. There is, in my view, certainly a need for some better form of coordination between language training and the work and interests of social scientists, so that students in the disciplines of social science shall be more encouraged to see the relevance of language study to their work. In brief, I am a strong proponent of language instruction for undergraduates, and I would not like to see requirements abolished. I could also make a strong case for language study with an emphasis on literature. However, I believe that the improvement of knowledge of languages will increasingly depend upon new forms and methods of relating language study to other subject-matter disciplines.

Sincerely yours,

George K. Romoser
Chairman

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Campus Correspondence

April 24, 1969

Dr. Hermann Reske, Chairman
German Department
Hamilton Smith Hall
Campus

Dear Dr. Reske:

You have requested a statement pertaining to language requirements for Animal Science majors.

Students who are contemplating work in the international area should have speaking and reading knowledge of Spanish, French or German. However, these opportunities in Animal Science are rare. AID and Foreign Agricultural Development Service prefer agricultural students who have majored in agricultural economics.

I have advised and encouraged Animal Science majors who are planning graduate study to take a one year language requirement, preferably German, as an undergraduate. Thus they can meet the graduate language requirement without sacrificing their graduate program.

Yours very truly,

Hilton Boynton

Dr. Hilton Boynton
Professor-in-charge

HB:mjc

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE PARK
20742

DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC AND SLAVIC
LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

APR 21 1969

April 16th, 1969

Mr. H. W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
National Office, AATG
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Dear Mr. Deeken:

In reply to your letter of March 21st, concerning foreign language requirements, I should like first of all to point out that an excellent chapter on "Why Americans should study foreign languages" is found in Frank M. Grittner's Teaching foreign languages (Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 22-37.

In addition I would like to submit the following argument. An educated person should at least have a full understanding of his native tongue. This is possible only if by knowing a foreign language the person becomes aware of the structure of language, since a comparison would at least require two units to compare. Furthermore, research in the Humanities would require knowledge of one of the major European languages as American civilization is an integral part of western culture.

Much might be said of foreign languages as a tool of research for scientists. However, I consider this a lost cause and would rather emphasize the importance of a liberal arts education in the Humanities where the understanding of our historical tradition and of the human mind requires this approach of contrast and comparison mentioned above.

Very sincerely yours,

Christoph Hering
Professor of German and
Chairman

CH:jnm

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

APR 21 1969

DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN

April 17, 1969

Mr. H. W. Deeken
Executive Secretary
American Association of Teachers of
German
339 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Dear Mr. Deeken:

In response to your request of March 21, I am happy to furnish the following statement:

The present tendency at institutions of higher learning toward a reevaluation of their function within the context of contemporary society is laudable and has, unquestionably, been long overdue. The fervor with which change has been advocated is justified in so far as it is expressive of an attempt to complement those social changes which have already taken place. The enthusiasm for change must, however, be bridled by dispassionate reflection, unless it be allowed to turn the path toward improvement into an aimless maze dedicated to change for its own sake.

A moment of dispassionate reflection is especially necessary with respect to one of the prime targets of current reform efforts: the foreign language requirement.

At the outset we must reasure ourselves that a Liberal Arts College is not a professional school, but a school which has the responsibility of giving its students a liberal education. In this process the student should learn to think clearly; his emotional life should acquire information which will widen his awareness of himself, of the world he lives in, and of the cultural traditions to which he is heir.

The study of a foreign language plays an important role in the student's total liberal educational process.

(a) It develops his intellectual powers.
Learning a second language requires not only mental discipline and prolonged attention, but it can also mean an emotional experience.

(b) It increases his personal culture. There is no better way of coming to understand one's language. Such an understanding is the conditio sine qua non for any civilized existence, for there is an intrinsic and necessary connection between a man's sense of language and most of the forms of culture.

(c) It promotes international understanding. The knowledge of a foreign language offers the student an opportunity to transcend the confinement of environmental immediacy and to attain a perspective which acknowledges differences in linguistic and cultural patterns.

If for reasons of ill considered insistence on change the study of foreign languages were no longer to be required for the attainment of a BA degree, the consequences of such a change would be felt in elementary and secondary education. The abolition of the reading requirement by colleges would seriously impede the remarkable progress which language learning has experienced in the schools from coast to coast in recent years. Indeed, many schools would react by cancelling all foreign language instruction. The result would be that students would be prevented from learning a second language even on a voluntary basis. To deprive students of such an option is to impoverish the educational function of the college -- particularly at a moment in history where civilized survival may well depend on the formation of supra-national societies. Finally - throughout the world, America is known and being criticized for her linguistic insouciance. To abolish the reading requirement at a time when other countries strengthen it, would assuredly do damage to our cultural prestige.

Sincerely yours,

C.R.Goedsche
Chairman

CRG:dk

CORNELL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
GOLDWIN SMITH HALL
ITHACA, N.Y. 14850

MAY 27 1969

Department of German Literature

Mr. H.W. Deeken,
American Association of Teachers of German,
National Office,
339 Walnut Street,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

May 23, 1969

Dear Mr. Deeken,

Thank you very much for your letter of March 21.

I am afraid that I will be of little help concerning the questions you raise. The problem of the language requirement has not come up during my tenure at Cornell. My colleagues assure me, however, that, whenever the issue was raised in the past, it was not the language departments who defended the requirement but, rather, English, History, and the Physical Sciences. Frankly, I would consider that the best possible approach. It is always bad to have to speak pro domo.

One of the best articles in defense of the foreign language requirement (I am sure you know it) is William R. Parker: Why a Foreign Language Requirement? College and University, Winter 1957.

Yours sincerely,

Herbert Deinert

Herbert Deinert
Chairman

HD:gj